

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 55

Designating the third week of April as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” for the year 2001 and all future years.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 8, 2001

Mr. WELLSTONE (for himself, Mr. DEWINE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. DODD, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MILLER, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. EDWARDS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

APRIL 3, 2001

Considered, amended, and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the third week of April as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” for the year 2001 and all future years.

Whereas the month of April has been designated National Child Abuse Prevention Month as an annual tradition initiated in 1979 by former President Jimmy Carter;

Whereas the most recent Government figures show that almost 1,000,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 1998, causing unspeakable pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens;

Whereas among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, more than 3 children die each day in this country;

Whereas the rate of child fatalities resulting from child abuse and neglect in 1998 for children aged 1 and younger accounted for 40 percent of the fatalities, and for children aged 5 and younger accounted for 77.5 percent of the fatalities;

Whereas head trauma is the leading cause of death of abused children, including the trauma known as Shaken Baby Syndrome;

Whereas Shaken Baby Syndrome is a totally preventable form of child abuse, caused by a caregiver losing control and shaking a baby that is usually less than 1 year of age;

Whereas Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death;

Whereas an estimated 3,000 children are diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome every year, with thousands more misdiagnosed and undetected;

Whereas Shaken Baby Syndrome often results in permanent, irreparable brain damage or death to an infant, and more than \$1,000,000 in medical costs to care for a single, disabled child in just the first few years of life;

Whereas the most effective solution for ending Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent such abuse, and it is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may prevent enormous medical and disability costs and untold grief for many families;

Whereas prevention programs have been shown to raise awareness and provide critically important information

about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, day-care workers, child protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives;

Whereas prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome is supported by groups such as the Shaken Baby Alliance, an organization which began with 3 mothers of children who had been diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome, and whose mission is to educate the general public and professionals about Shaken Baby Syndrome and to increase support for victims and victim families in the health care and criminal justice systems;

Whereas child abuse prevention programs and “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” are supported by the Shaken Baby Alliance, Children’s Defense Fund, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, Child Welfare League of America, Prevent Child Abuse America, Brain Injury Association, National Child Abuse Coalition, National Exchange Club Foundation, American Humane Association, Center for Child Protection and Family Support, Inc., National Association Of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions, and many other organizations including the National Basketball Association, which is sponsoring a series of “NBA Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Night 2001” events to generate public awareness about the issue of child abuse and neglect during National Child Abuse Prevention Month 2001;

Whereas a year 2000 survey by Prevent Child Abuse America shows that 1/2 of all Americans believe child abuse and neglect is the most important issue facing this country compared to other public health issues; and

Whereas Congress strongly supports efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the third week of April, as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” for the year 2001; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to remember the victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome and participate in educational programs to help prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

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